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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JULY 08, 2009

Summary: Reports of a U.S. drone attack on a militant training center in South Waziristan that killed 16 militants received prominent front page coverage in all Pakistani newspapers on Wednesday. Newspapers also widely covered a meeting between the Pakistani President Zardari, Prime Minister Gilani, and Chief of the Army Staff Kiyani who met the "third time in a week to discuss internal and external threats." President Zardari's statement that "militants and extremists have been deliberately created and nurtured as a policy to achieve some short-term tactical objectives" was also highlighted by all newspapers. Newspapers also gave front-page coverage to the visit of British Foreign Secretary Miliband who, they reported, urged "long-term security relations with Pakistan."

Most major dailies ran analytical editorials on the recently-inked U.S.-Russia accords. The English daily, "Dawn," noted that "supplies through Russia should take some pressure off Pakistan in terms of fuel supply and other materials for the coalition forces. However, Islamabad's role in the war on terror will continue to remain crucial." Another English daily, "The News," observed that the "cordial note" struck between U.S. President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart Medvedev during their first summit meeting at the Kremlin has important implications for Pakistan, noting that "in past decades, decisions taken in Washington and Moscow have altered the fate of our country." The Urdu daily, "Express" wrote: "As a result of several issues having been resolved between the two countries, now it will be easy for the world - and these two countries in particular - to emerge from the effects of the Cold War era." End Summary.

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News Stories  
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"U.S. Drone Kills 16 Militants In South Waziristan" "Dawn" (07/08)

"A suspected U.S. drone fired two missiles at a militant training centre in Laddha subdivision of South Waziristan on Tuesday, killing 16 militants and injuring 10 others. Five foreigners were among the dead, security officials said. The camp allegedly run by militants loyal to Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud was in Chenakai area of the Shabikhels, a sub clan of Mehsud tribe."

"Court Dismisses Petition Against Drone Attacks" "Dawn" (07/08)

"The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday dismissed a petition seeking halt to drone attacks on the tribal areas of the country by America and asking under what law the government had permitted the

attacks."

"Troika Meets For Third Time In A Week" "Dawn" (07/08)

"President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani met on Tuesday for a third time in seven days to 'discuss internal and external threats.' Though an official press release maintained that the three discussed matters concerning national security, it did not mention any specific threat to the security of the country."

"Militants Nurtured For Short-Term Objectives: Zardari" "Dawn" (07/08)

"President Asif Ali Zardari said on Tuesday that militants and extremists had been deliberately created and nurtured as a policy to achieve some short-term tactical objectives. 'They did not emerge because the civil bureaucracy was weak or demoralized. Let us be truthful and make a candid admission of the reality,' the President said."

"U.K. Has Long-Term Security Relations With Pak: Miliband" "Dawn" (07/08)

"British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said on Tuesday his government shared Pakistan's concern and realized fully the difficulties it faced because of the large number of people displaced by the military operation in Malakand division. During a visit to a camp of the internally displaced persons in Chota Lahore tehsil, Mr. Miliband said his government was committed to providing assistance for the IDPs. Mr. Miliband arrived in Islamabad earlier in the day on a three-day official visit."

"U.S. Seeks No Pak Bases: Obama" "The Nation" (07/08)

"President Barack Obama said on Tuesday that we seek no bases, nor do we want to control these nations - Afghanistan and Pakistan. Instead, we want to work with international partners, including Russia, to help Afghans and Pakistanis advance their own security and prosperity. Neither America nor Russia has an interest in an Afghanistan or Pakistan governed by the Taliban. It is time to work together on behalf of a different future."

"Pak Army Capable Of Defeating Militants, Says Mullen" "Dawn" (07/08)

"The operations in Swat and other areas of the NWFP have encouraged the United States to believe that Pakistan is capable to conducting a similar offensive in South Waziristan, America's top military official Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a briefing in Washington on Tuesday."

"Pakistan Opposes Any conditions To U.S. Aid" "The News" (07/08)

"Pakistan on Tuesday strongly opposed any moves to attach strings to U.S. aid for it.... Senator Dr. Babar Awan, who met with Obama Administration officials in Washington on Monday, spoke in the backdrop of recent proposals on the Capitol Hill to condition future American assistance for the key South Asian country."

"Kerry Says U.S. Aid For Pakistan Also In Indian Interest" "The News" (07/08)

"Senator John Kerry, Chairman of the influential Foreign Relations Committee, on Tuesday said U.S. expansion in aid for Pakistan under a bipartisan legislation - recasting relationship between the two countries - is also in India's interest."

"U.S. Can Help Reduce Tensions Over Kashmir, Says Diplomat" "Dawn" (07/08)

"President Barack Obama's choice for Ambassador to India says he will support a resumption of talks between India and Pakistan. Tim Roemer told a Senate confirmation hearing on Tuesday that he would encourage the two countries to improve communications to ease tension in case of future terrorist attacks."

"Three Militants Killed, 34 Detained, Says ISPR" "Dawn" (07/08)

"Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday that three militants had been killed and 34 terrorists captured in Swat and Bannu since Monday. During a search operation in Shukdara area of Swat, local terrorist leader Muhammad Rasool, brother of Ibn-e-Amin, and 'commander' Akram were killed. Eight sub-machine guns, two pistols and four 7mm rifles were seized."

"44 Schools Damaged In Maidan Operation" "Dawn" (07/08)

"Forty-four government schools in the Maidan tehsil of Lower Dir have been damaged since the military operation was launched in the area, sources in the education department told 'Dawn' on Monday. Most of the schools, including 16 for girls were either blown up or set on fire by militants after the operation against them began."

"Obama Denies Giving Israel Green Light To Hit Iran" "The News" (07/08)

"U.S. President Barack Obama on Tuesday strongly denied that the United States had given Israel a green light to strike Iran's nuclear facilities, in an interview on CNN television."

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Editorials/Op-eds  
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"U.S.-Russia Accord," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (07/08)

"Supplies through Russia should take some pressure off Pakistan in terms of fuel supply and other material for the coalition forces. However, Islamabad's role in the war on terror will continue to remain crucial because of the dual nature of Pakistan's responsibilities: it has to crush insurgency within its borders as well as coordinate with forces across the Durand Line to stop the Taliban's two-way movement.... The series of agreements, especially the accord on the sensitive nuclear issue, should serve to remove mistrust between the two countries, reflecting as they do President Obama's continued search for a new image for his country - an image that will be in sharp contrast to the jingoism that characterized the policies of the Bush era."

"Friends, Not Foes," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (07/08)

"The cordial note struck between U.S. President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev during their first summit meeting at the Kremlin has important implications for Pakistan.... The latest decisions mean the U.S. involvement and its offensive in the region seem set to continue. This somewhat complicates the picture as far as the war against terrorism goes for Pakistan. We all know that militancy and the sometimes subtle support for it we find in quite unexpected places is spurred on by the widespread hatred for the U.S. and its policies. There are many who will argue militancy will end only if the US pulls out of the region. But the talks in Moscow indicate the pace of the war may accelerate. This then is the reality Pakistan must live with."

"New Beginning Of America, Russia Relations," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (07/08)

"According to a news report, the Russian and American Presidents have agreed to reduce nuclear weapons.... We should welcome this start of a new era of America-Russia cooperation... As a result of the several issues being resolved between the two countries, it would now be easy to bring out these two countries in particular and the entire world in general from the effects of the Cold War era."

"NATO Gets Its Supply Route From Russia," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (07/08)

"The transit route issue has clearly forced the Obama administration to step back from the Russia policy of the Bush administration, signaled by the Monday summit.... Will this mean a reduction of Pakistan's leverage in any way? Islamabad remains important because of the land route it provides for NATO supplies. If there is any

reduction it will be bought by the U.S. only at a big financial cost. But far more than that is the developing consensus in the neighborhood of Pakistan behind the NATO presence in Afghanistan and the success of its mission against terrorism. This development will affect Pakistan's policy of assistance to this mission conditional to rolling back the Indian encroachment in Afghanistan and resultant interference inside Pakistan. No one at the international level seems to worry about Governor NWFP Owais Ghani's warning about 'dangerous' American activities across the Durand Line."

"Mending U.S.-Russia Ties," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (07/08)

"No doubt, Moscow is as much as concerned about terrorism as Washington but this gesture of allowing its air space for 4,500 flights a year would prove of great help to the U.S. actually engaged in the fight against militants. One would like to hope that the agreement to cut the number of nuclear warheads in the arsenals of each country to between 1,500 and 1,675 within seven years would ultimately pave the way for a complete global nuclear disarmament."

"U.S.-Russia Accord," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (07/08)

"Being Obama's first ever visit to Russia as President of the U.S., the agreements will have a noticeable impact on not just the relations between the two countries but also on entire Asia, especially the South Asian region."

"It Is Something More Than Just N. Weapons," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (07/08)

"In our view, despite all the pious intentions, it is a symbolic gesture as the maintenance of a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons was an extra burden and liability. If the purpose is to promote world peace, something more is required and that is to bring an end to the hegemonic designs, aggressive postures and occupation of territories for economic and political gains.... So the need is that American and Russian leadership must move forward from just reduction of war heads to total elimination of WMDs to make the world secure and peaceful."

"America's Nuclear Games," an op-ed by Shireen M. Mazari in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (07/08)

"Obama is certainly stretching his global goodwill to its limits.... The U.S. and Russian leaders declared in a grand fashion that they have agreed to reduce their existing nuclear stockpiles but failed to tell the world that most of these reductions would be of redundant weapons which will create space for the new ones. After all, neither side avowed to stop adding to their arsenals!... The U.S. pushing its nuclear agenda globally that we must raise our voices of concern over what seems to have become a covert official U.S. policy - to allow Israel to deal with Iran's nuclear facilities.... So a new and threatening pattern is emerging even as Obama seeks to woo the world with what is now becoming his glibness rather than a serious intent to alter the course of U.S. policies on security issues."

"Fanatic India's Defense Budget; And Anti-Pakistan Designs," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (07/08)

"India has increased its defense budget by 34 percent.... seven times more than Pakistan.... Indian government has recognized that due to steps taken by Pakistan the infiltration [into Indian Kashmir] has stopped and the situation in the Indian held Kashmir has improved from Indian point of view. Present Pakistani government's friendliness toward India is no secret; so much so that under U.S. pressure President Asif Ali Zardari has even said that he did not feel threatened from India.... One third increase in the Indian defense budget is a manifestation of India's dangerous designs.... We should be alarmed over the increase in the Indian defense budget."

"Massive Increase In Indian Defense Budget," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (07/08)

"The [34 percent] increase in Indian defense budget shows its aggressive ambitions.... Pakistan adopted a policy of putting pressure on India to coax it into negotiations, but this policy failed as the U.S. President announced that he is not ready to put any pressure on India; in fact [he said] that India and Pakistan should resolve their disputes themselves. However, there is a need to remain vigilant about India's aggressive designs."

"IDP Woes," an op-ed by Zofeen T. Ebrahim in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (07/08)

"Despite urgent calls for \$543 million through Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan for assistance of the IDPs, they have so far received \$166 million (31 per cent).... And if the money does not come through fast, relief organizations warn, the host families will not be able to sustain the IDPs much longer. And it is this 'fatigue' of the host families that is indeed worrying, if the international community continues to ignore calls for help. If relief does not come soon enough, the 90 per cent of the IDPs living with relatives and friends may become so desperate as to come into the 21 IDP camps strewn across the five districts in NWFP.... However, if the international community does not respond to the appeal, there is likelihood that the 'Jihadists' will take advantage of the situation like they did in 2005 and 2008 earthquakes in AJK and Balochistan, respectively, offering immediate relief and succor."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)  
Patterson